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SUBJECT: EU AND NATO CONCERNED ABOUT BOSNIA, BUT PLANS FOR  
EUFOR TRANSITION MOVING FORWARD

Classified By: USEU Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Christopher Murray for reas  
ons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) This is a joint cable from USEU and USNATO.

12. (C) Summary: On June 22, NATO and EU Ambassadors met in the NAC-PSC format to discuss Bosnia. Most presenters lamented the lack of political progress in Bosnia, noting that High Rep Inzko had invoked Bonn powers over the weekend, but agreed that the security situation is stable. A notable exception to this was Turkey, which emphasized the fragility of the security situation and called for EUFOR ALTHEA to continue to operate under its current mandate. EU High Rep Javier Solana said the EU will continue planning for the eventual transition of EUFOR ALTHEA to a non-executive mission, and for a transition of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) to an enhanced EU Special Representative (EUSR) -- points repeated by the Swedish EU Ambassador. Solana spoke highly of his trip to Bosnia alongside Vice President Biden, stressing the importance of keeping the U.S. and EU aligned on Bosnia policy. DSACEUR and EU Operational Commander said SHAPE had completed a training and needs analysis for the Bosnian military and would incorporate the findings into the operations plan (OPLAN) for a reconfigured EUFOR. The OPLAN will be presented to EU Member States for comment in mid-August, with briefings to the EU Military Committee on September 2 and EU Ambassadors on September 9. NATO Secretary General Jaap De Hoop Scheffer confirmed that the door to NATO membership remains open, but stressed that Bosnia still has some work to do before being ready for a Membership Action Plan. During a seemingly impromptu exchange at the end of the meeting, Solana thanked De Hoop Scheffer for all he had done for NATO-EU relations, but the NATO SYG lamented that NATO-EU cooperation was not broader and closer. End Summary.

13. (C) On June 22, NATO and EU Ambassadors met in the NAC-PSC format to discuss Bosnia. The brief session, which lasted less than an hour, was hosted by the EU and chaired by High Rep Javier Solana. Solana opened the meeting by describing his joint visit to Bosnia with Vice President Biden. He said they had spoken to a number of key Bosnian leaders, sending a message of U.S.-EU unity and trying to calm the nationalist rhetoric. Solana averred that the U.S. and EU both agreed to continue working toward fulfillment of the 5 2 conditions and to move ahead with an eventual OHR transition. He also stressed that he and Vice President Biden had agreed that it will be vital to move Bosnia "in the direction of Europe." Solana expressed concern that the situation in Bosnia had forced High Rep Inzko to invoke the Bonn powers over the weekend and said he hopes the situation

will calm down in the coming days and weeks. In the meantime, since the political tension had not translated into violence, he said the EU would continue to plan for the reconfiguration of Operation ALTHEA to a non-executive mission. Solana also promised that the EU would continue to insist on the fulfillment of the 5-2 to allow a transition from the OHR to an enhanced EUSR.

¶4. (C) DSACEUR and EUFOR Operational Commander, Gen. John McColl, described the security situation in Bosnia as calm and stable despite the political difficulties, saying there was no evidence to suggest this would change. EUFOR is ready to intervene if necessary, but if not, will remain focused on its monitoring, advising, and training tasks. In addition, he noted that EUFOR had been involved in several operations to target persons indicted for war crimes. McColl noted that while EUFOR remained "viable for the moment," the flexibility of troop contributors is key to ensuring that gaps do not arise in EUFOR's situational awareness as some nations begin to downsize or withdraw their contingents. He also expressed concern at reductions in helicopter support, specifically the announcement that Switzerland would withdraw its two helicopters by the end of September.

¶5. (C) McColl said the Berlin Plus arrangements had been a proven success in Bosnia, with SHAPE now providing planning support to the EU for an eventual transition to a non-executive mission. McColl said that after EU foreign and defense ministers approved the concept of operations for that transition in May, he and his staff began preparing the operations plan (OPLAN). The reconfigured mission would

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include a small headquarters in theater, along with several training teams, and would also include units from contributing states to carry out the training. During his briefing and in response to questions from the U.S., McColl said SHAPE had completed a training and needs analysis for the Bosnian military forces, which would allow him to flesh out the details of a reconfigured EUFOR mandate in the OPLAN.

A draft OPLAN will be circulated to EU Member States in August for comment, with Gen. McColl briefing the EU Military Committee on September 2 and EU Ambassadors on September 9.

¶6. (C) NATO Secretary General, Jaap De Hoop Scheffer, said NATO's cooperation with Bosnia takes place in the context of the Partnership for Peace and Intensified Dialogue. He confirmed that the door to NATO membership remains open, but stressed that Bosnia still has some work to do before it is ready for a Membership Action Plan. He expressed hope that Bosnia's political leaders will find a way to bridge their differences. On Operation ALTHEA, he said Berlin Plus arrangements had been successful, and that NATO is closely following EU discussions of an eventual transition to a non-executive mission. He requested that the EU consult with NATO as it makes plans and that regular NAC-PSC meetings continue.

¶7. (C) NATO's Chairman of the Military Committee, Admiral Di Paola, said Bosnia is moving ahead on the planning process for defense reform, but budget shortfalls have slowed capacity development while political and ethnic divisions are constraining the reform process. He said NATO understands that the Berlin Plus link will remain even after the reconfiguration of Operation ALTHEA, and confirmed that NATO stands ready to work with the relevant EU bodies. He said NATO-EU coordination would be important given that NATO is also examining its presence in Bosnia and the region.

¶8. (C) Only Turkey, the U.S., Sweden and the Czech Republic made interventions (Note: Sweden's EU Ambassador said it would be unfortunate if no EU Member States commented, and so intervened as the incoming EU Presidency country. This obliged the Czechs, as current EU President, to make a brief comment as well. End Note.) Turkey's NATO Ambassador said that although the situation in Bosnia seems stable, it is

actually quite fragile beneath the surface. As current UNSC President and an active member of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, he said Turkey is following the situation closely. He argued that given the fragility of the situation, EUFOR ALTHEA should continue to function under its current mandate, noting that Turkey is the third largest contributor to EUFOR. Saying the OHR should have access to the Bonn powers when necessary, he argued that a transition from the OHR to an enhanced EUSR should only take place after all conditions are met. Turkey then reiterated its call for close consultations with both NATO and non-EU troop contributors before any decision to reconfigure EUFOR, noting that these consultations would take place with due regard for each institution's decision-making autonomy, as provided for in the Berlin Plus arrangements. As noted in para 5, the U.S. asked for clarification on the EU's planning timeline. The Swedish EU Ambassador said that Sweden would continue to take forward planning for an eventual reconfiguration of ALTHEA and a transition to an enhanced EUSR, but noted that the EUSR transition could only take place after the 5<sup>2</sup> were fulfilled. The OHR transition would be important to help Bosnia move closer to the EU, he argued. The Czech Republic also welcomed the preparatory work for a transition of ALTHEA to a non-executive mandate, but said that the approval of planning documents does not pre-judge the evolution of the mission.

¶9. (C) The meeting closed after Solana quickly dismissed the Any Other Business item -- during which we had planned to raise international cooperation in Afghanistan -- and made a personal comment to De Hoop Scheffer. Solana thanked De Hoop Scheffer for his commitment to NATO-EU relations and his tireless work to make the NAC-PSC a productive format despite persistent challenges. De Hoop Scheffer responded by thanking Solana and saying that one of the true disappointments of his tenure was that NATO and the EU had not made greater progress on cooperation. He noted that the EU had matured in the five years since the launch of EUFOR ALTHEA and said he would like to see the growth and

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intensification of the NATO-EU dialogue. Comment: USEU raised international cooperation in Afghanistan with NATO Allies and EU Member States during the PSC Plus 8 meeting the following day (SEPTEL). End Comment.

MURRAY

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